

2007-2008



# Cal Grant New Recipient Reference Manual



California Student Aid Commission

## For your privacy and protection

The California Student Aid Commission (Commission) is committed to the privacy of all individuals participating in any Commission program, and abides by the Information Practices Act of 1977 (Civil Code Section 1798, et seq.) In addition to the provisions listed below, the Commission's Privacy Policy and contact information regarding this policy can be seen at [www.csac.ca.gov/Privacy.asp](http://www.csac.ca.gov/Privacy.asp).

The Commission will never request any financial account information from you. Students should not release this type of information to anyone unless they are absolutely certain of the caller's identity.

The Commission is taking steps to protect students from identity information theft. Like many other state and federal agencies, the Commission used students' Social Security Numbers (SSN) as a means of identifying and tracking student information for its various financial aid programs, including Cal Grants. The Commission has replaced the SSN with a unique student identification number for information tracking and sharing purposes. All Commission mailed student correspondence and other written notifications concerning students now use the "unique student identifier" instead of your SSN.

Information on Cal Grant participants who are under the age of 18 may be released to their legal guardians without written permission. Cal Grant participants over the age of 18 must provide written permission allowing the Commission to release information to an individual other than the participant. Guidelines for submitting a release request to the Commission are outlined on page 17 of this manual.



Dear Cal Grant Recipient,

On behalf of the California Student Aid Commission, let me congratulate you on your Cal Grant award! I understand how hard you are working as I, too, used a Cal Grant to get a college degree. Your diligent work to attain a college degree is admirable.

I am sending you this booklet so you can learn about your new Cal Grant and the simple actions you must take to maintain your Cal Grant eligibility. For example, let's say you move and your address changes. You must let the Commission know right away, so we can continue to send you important information about your grant. It's also easy for you to update your information using the new Web site designed especially for students, WebGrants for Students. Read more about it on page 10.

The Commission works as a partner with your school and your financial aid advisor to get you the most current financial aid information available. I wish you every success in college as you work toward realizing your dream of attaining a college education.



Diana Fuentes-Michel  
Executive Director  
California Student Aid Commission



# CONTENTS

## INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CAL GRANT

Minimum Cal Grant Requirements .....	4
Cal Grant A, B and C Programs .....	5
Use Your Cal Grant .....	7
Declining Your Award.....	7
Attendance At More Than One School.....	7
Cal Grant Award Amounts.....	8
Delivery of Cal Grant Funds .....	9
Renewing Your Cal Grant Award .....	9

## MAKING CHANGES TO YOUR INFORMATION

Changing Schools .....	10
Changing Your Housing Plans .....	10
Attending School Less than Half-time .....	11
Changing Your Name or Address .....	11
Reporting a Change in Financial Status .....	11
Changing Cal Grant Program Choice .....	12
Correcting Your Social Security Number .....	13
Requesting Payment for Summer School...	13
Requesting a Leave of Absence .....	14
Requesting Military Deferment.....	14
Loan Default .....	15
Satisfactory Academic Progress .....	15
Domestic Partnership Information .....	16
How to File an Appeal .....	16
Personal Information Release Request .....	17

## REFERENCES

How to Contact the Commission .....	18
-------------------------------------	----



# Information about your Cal Grant

Congratulations, you have been awarded a Cal Grant! In order to make the best use of your Cal Grant funds, there are some things that you should know. It is very important that you read and understand the procedures and policies outlined in this booklet. Failure to follow these procedures could result in your award being cancelled and the possible repayment of funds that you have received. If you have questions regarding any procedures or policies outlined in this manual, please contact the California Student Aid Commission (Commission). See the back of this booklet for contact information.

The Cal Grant New Recipient Reference Manual is intended to provide you with a summary of basic information about your Cal Grant. This manual is not intended to be a complete explanation of the legal requirements pertaining to Cal Grants, nor is it intended as a substitute for consulting Education Code sections 69430-69440 and regulations adopted by the Commission, as they affect Cal Grants. If the information in this manual differs from the law, the law will apply.

Cal Grant award selections are based on information from your FAFSA and your GPA or test score. If it is determined that the Commission offered a Cal Grant award to an individual who does not meet the required selection criteria, the award offer will be withdrawn. As cited in Education Code, Section 69517.5, the Commission, with the assistance of the Attorney General's Office, may seek a refund on any Cal Grant funds disbursed to a student if the student or the parent(s) incorrectly reported the student's financial eligibility which then resulted in the offer of a Cal Grant award.

Only the Commission can make an official Cal Grant award offer. Any award estimates made by a college are not official until confirmed by the Commission. Your school will verify your eligibility for Cal Grant payment after the awarding of a Cal Grant by the Commission.

This Cal Grant award is part of your financial aid package. When you receive a notice regarding a financial aid award or scholarship, you should notify your campus financial aid advisor right away. Your advisor will combine all your awards to create the best financial aid package for you.

Cal Grant recipients can receive no more than four years of full-time grant payment. The actual number of terms of payment you may receive will be based on your grade level (year in college such as freshman, sophomore, etc.) when you are first paid in the program. If you are first paid as a second, third or fourth year student, you will not receive a full four years of payment. All payments stop when the student receives a bachelor's degree. Under certain circumstances, a student may continue to be eligible for a Cal Grant such as when a student continues on to earn a teaching credential or is enrolled in mandatory five-year program that requires attendance longer than four years.

To set your initial program eligibility, the Commission will request a grade level verification from the school where you receive your first Cal Grant payment. If we do not receive grade level verification directly from your school, you will be sent a letter requesting that you have your school send the Commission the necessary verification. Failure to provide verification may result in cancellation of your award.

Occasionally, other financial aid awards will cover your tuition and fees. In this situation, your Cal Grant tuition and fee funds will not be disbursed. You should see your financial aid advisor for questions regarding disbursement of your financial aid.

## Minimum Cal Grant Program Requirements

Each Cal Grant recipient must:

- .. Be a resident of California
- .. Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
- .. Have financial need for attendance at an eligible California school in 2007-2008
- .. Maintain no less than halftime enrollment
- .. Maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by the school
- .. Meet U.S. Selective Service requirements
- .. Not exceed the income and asset ceilings set by the Commission
- .. Demonstrate the minimum financial need required for selection

Each Cal Grant recipient may not:

- .. Have a defaulted student loan or owe a grant repayment.
- .. Have a bachelor's or higher degree (e.g. M.A.) or the equivalent.

## Entitlement or Competitive

Your new Cal Grant award offer is either an Entitlement Grant or a Competitive Grant. You can determine the type of grant you have by looking at your Cal Grant ID number. This is located on your California Aid Report (CAR).

Numbers beginning with "E" are Entitlement Grants and numbers beginning with "C" are Competitive grants. Entitlement awards were offered to on-time applicants who did the following:

- met the minimum Cal Grant requirements;
- were considered California residents at the time of their high school graduations;
- submitted a high school GPA of at least a 2.00, or submitted an SAT, ACT or GED test score;
- met the minimum GPA requirement of 3.00 for Cal Grant A or 2.00 for Cal Grant B;
- in some awards, graduated from a California high school (or completed a high school graduation equivalency) on or after July 1, 2000;
- met all your high school's graduation requirements or or completed a high school graduation equivalency.

Applicants who were not selected for an entitlement grant were considered for a competitive grant. Competitive grant recipients also had to meet the minimum requirements listed but in addition, competitive selection criteria was used to select recipients. Selection criteria consists of the following elements: grade point average, parental education level, access equalizer, household status, and family income and household size.

## Cal Grant A, B, and C Programs

Cal Grant A awards provide grant funds to help pay tuition and fees at qualifying institutions offering academic programs of at least two years in length.

Community College (CC) Reserve - If you are a Cal Grant A participant and attending a California Community College, the Commission will

reserve the award for you for two years. You may request a third year of reserve in writing.

Cal Grant B awards provide grant funds to help pay for your tuition, student fees and other educational costs in a for-credit instructional program of not less than one year in length.

The Cal Grant B award during your first year, or while attending a California Community College, will pay for educational expenses, including living expenses and expenses for transportation, supplies and books, up to \$1551. Beginning with the second year of Cal Grant B benefits or after transfer to a four year school, the award also helps pay for tuition and fees at public or private four-year colleges or other qualifying institutions.

California Community College (CCC) Cal Grant B Recipients: Students who receive a Cal Grant B and attend a CCC, may receive access costs of up to \$1,551. California Community College fees are not covered by a Cal Grant B.

If you have a CC Reserve award or a Cal Grant B, it can be worth a lot to you when you transfer to a tuition/fee-charging school. Visit the Transfer Center or counseling department at your community college. The Transfer Center or counseling staff can help you prepare for transfer, and assist you in making sure you have the appropriate courses and units to transfer. In addition, you will need to file a G-10 Grant Record Change Form for Students with the Commission before you transfer to ensure that your Cal Grant will transfer with you.

Cal Grant C awards assist students with tuition, fee and training costs for occupational or technical, or vocational programs. You must be enrolled in a program that is at least four months in length. If you are getting a Cal Grant C and are attending a California Community College, you may receive, currently, up to \$576 for tools, books and supplies.

## Use of Your Cal Grant

You may use your Cal Grant at a participating California postsecondary institution. If you take extension courses, adult education and continuing education programs that do not participate in Federal financial aid programs, you are not eligible for Cal Grant funding.

## Declining Your Cal Grant Award

If you wish to decline a Cal Grant, use the Recipient Change Form, included with your CAR letter. Your withdrawal discontinues the Cal Grant offer and is irrevocable. If you decline an entitlement award, you can reapply as a new applicant in future years. However, you may have to compete for a competitive Cal Grant , which are limited to 11,250 total awards. Contact the Commission if you have any questions on declining your award.

## Attendance At More than One School

Your Cal Grant payment will only be disbursed to you at one institution per term. If you are attending more than one school in a term, you must decide at which school you want to be paid and contact the Commission with this information.

Please contact the school's financial aid office to help you decide at which school you should receive payment.

## Cal Grant Award Amounts

Your Cal Grant award amount will vary based on your financial need, your school cost and the maximum authorized award levels. Your grant will not cover all of your college expenses. Refer to the California Aid Report (CAR) enclosed with this booklet for your estimated yearly Cal Grant award amount. Your school will determine your actual Cal Grant payment amount. This award amount may change due to other forms of financial aid you may be receiving. This amount may be less than the maximum amount on your CAR.

Award amounts on the CAR are based on full-time attendance for one academic year. If you attend less than full-time, your payments may be reduced. Please note that basic award amounts are subject to change in the State Budget Act that is not decided until July of each year.

## Delivery of Cal Grant Funds

Cal Grant funds are paid on a term-by-term basis. The Commission only disburses Cal Grant funds directly to your school. The Commission does not pay funds directly to the student. The Commission will never request your financial account information to deposit Cal Grant funds to you. Check with your school financial aid office to find out about their disbursement schedule.

## Renewing Your Cal Grant Award

Near the end of each school year, a Cal Grant Renewal letter, which indicates either your eligibility to renew your award or announces the end of your eligibility, is sent to you. If you are renewing a Cal Grant award, you must show financial need of at least \$100 for the renewal year. You do not need to submit another verified Cal Grant Grade Point Average (GPA), or GPA Verification Form to the Commission.

To renew your award for next year (the 2008-2009 school year), you must:

- continuously maintain your current eligibility throughout the 2007-2008 year;
- file a 2008-2009 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) listing your school of attendance;
- and, have remaining Cal Grant eligibility.

To be eligible for a renewed award, all 2007-2008 terms must be accounted for, either by your having received payment or by your filing a leave of absence request with the Commission. The terms must be reported by September 30, 2007 or your Cal Grant will be withdrawn.



## Making Changes to Your Information

There are several ways to make changes to your Cal Grant information -

- you may use the online access WebGrants for Students. Log on to [www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov) , then click on WebGrants for Students . Once you set up your account, you can use it to submit address and school changes online, check the status of your Cal Grant application, or payment history. New features and tools will be added over time to help you maintain your award.
- you can submit your changes in writing, via mail or fax; or
- you may call our Student Support Services Unit at 1-888-224-7268.

## Changing Schools

You must notify the Commission as early as possible if you do not attend the first school listed on your California Aid Report (CAR). Also, be sure the school you attend is listed on your federal Student Aid Report (SAR); if not, you should contact the SAR processor at (800) 433-3243 to forward the information to your new school or visit the Web site at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) . You may only use your Cal Grant at participating Cal Grant schools. Log on to WebGrants for Students and use the "School Change Simulator" located under 'tools' to determine if the school you plan to attend is a Cal Grant eligible school.

## Changing Your Housing Plans

Your selection for a Cal Grant award was based on the expected cost of attendance at the school (or schools)

listed on your Student Aid Report (SAR) and the expected housing plans (on-campus, off-campus or living with parents or relatives) you listed with those schools. Be sure to review your latest SAR and report any housing plan changes to the Commission.

NOTE: Your financial need will be reevaluated if you change your school choice or housing plans. If your expenses are reduced due to a change, your grant may be cancelled. When you notify the Commission of a school change, state the effective date of the change and whether you will live on-campus, off-campus, or with parents or relatives. Your grant offer may be cancelled if you attend an out-of-state school or an ineligible California institution.

## Attending School Less than half-time

If your enrollment falls below half-time at any time, you must inform the Commission immediately. (Refer to the Leave of Absence section on page 14 of this manual).

## Changing Your Name or Address

Please immediately notify the Commission if your name or address changes or differs from the address on your CAR or on any Commission correspondence that you receive. The Commission is not responsible for mail not received from or by you. Please have your mail forwarded if you are away from your permanent address.

## Reporting a Change In Your Financial Status

If your financial circumstances have changed since you filed your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), or you believe you have special financial circumstances which may affect your eligibility, contact the campus financial aid office where you plan to enroll in the fall. If appropriate, your campus financial aid office can submit financial changes to the Commission on a Grant Record Change Form for Schools (G-21) no later than September 30, 2007. Your school is also required to report any situations or changes that may result in the reduction or withdrawal of your award.

## Changing the Cal Grant Program Choice

If your CAR states you are eligible for more than one Cal Grant program, discuss your choices with your campus financial aid advisor. They can help you decide which award will be of most value to you. Please remember! Your campus financial aid advisor's signature is required for any program changes.

Program changes must be received within 30 days of the date of your award letter and are irrevocable once your school has reported a grant payment to the Commission. Refer to the instructions on your Recipient Change Form.

If you are financially eligible for a Cal Grant C and would like to be considered for a C award, your request must be received within 30 days of the date of your award letter.

## Correcting Your Social Security Number

You must notify the Commission if the Social Security number printed on the FAFSA is not correct. Complete the enclosed Recipient Change Form and submit a copy of your Social Security card to the Commission.

## Requesting Payment for Summer School

New 2007-2008 Cal Grant A and B recipients may not activate their grant during their summer 2007 attendance. New recipients must begin receiving payment in the Fall of the 2007-2008 academic year.

Cal Grant C payments for Summer 2007 are available for course work which begins on or after July 1, 2007. Your school should request payment by August 31, 2007. You must be enrolled at least half-time to be eligible for summer payment. Payment for non-mandatory summer coursework (June-August 2007) is available for all renewal grant recipients. The Commission must receive your request, in writing, no later than the end of your summer term.

If you are eligible, you or your school may request Summer 2007 payment after March 1, 2007. Your request should include your name, address, Social Security number, the name of the school you will be attending, and your housing arrangements. Summer Cal Grant payment amounts are based on the regular school year grant and may not be sufficient to meet all summer tuition/fee charges.

Please note: Summer payments will reduce your remaining program eligibility for Cal Grant benefits. Be sure to consult with your school financial aid office to maximize the use of your Cal Grant.

## Requesting a Leave of Absence

If you are not enrolled at least half-time for any term, you must request a leave of absence from the Cal Grant program. A leave may be requested in writing or by filing a Grant Record Change Form for Students (G-10).

You may obtain the G-10 from your school's financial aid office, the Commission or by downloading it from the Commission's Web site at [www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov). Click on "Publications", then "Participant Forms and Applications", then "G-10".

You may also ask your school to report a leave of absence on your behalf. However, it is your responsibility to make sure that the Commission has been informed of your leave. Your total leave time may not exceed one academic year, as defined by your school. Extensions may be granted for exceptional situations, on an appeal basis only.

## Requesting Military Deferment

If you are on active duty in the United States Armed Forces or Coast Guard, you may have your Cal Grant deferred for up to three years. Please request this deferment in writing by filling out a Deferment Request Form (G-12) available at [www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov).

## Loan Default

California law prohibits the payment of a Cal Grant to any individual who:

- failed to repay a federal or state grant, if required, or
- previously defaulted on a student loan and has not made satisfactory repayment arrangements.

If you believe you are in this situation, you must immediately report this information to your campus financial aid office.

If at any time it is determined that you owe a grant refund or are in default of a loan and have not made satisfactory repayment arrangements, your Cal Grant will be cancelled. You may be required to repay any Cal Grant funds that you received while you were in default.

## Not Making Satisfactory Academic Progress

Federal and State regulations require that you make progress toward your degree objective in order to receive financial aid. Each school determines their satisfactory academic progress (SAP) standards. If your school notifies the Commission that you are not meeting SAP standards, you will not receive Cal Grant payments until your school notifies the Commission that you are again meeting its SAP standards. If your school does not certify that you are meeting SAP standards within three consecutive semesters or four consecutive quarters from your first suspension, your Cal Grant award will be cancelled.

If the information reported is incorrect, or your SAP status changes within the academic year, contact your financial aid office and request that they notify the Commission.

## Reporting Domestic Partnership Information

Assembly Bill (AB) 205, known as the California Domestic Partner Rights and Responsibilities Act of 2003 (Act), was enacted on September 22, 2003 and became effective on January 1, 2005. The Act extends new rights, benefits and obligations to individuals in California Registered Domestic Partnerships. The provisions of the Act apply to state and institutional financial aid only, not to federal aid.

The Act extended the rights and duties of spouses to couples registered as domestic partners with the California Secretary of State ("Registered Domestic Partners").

If you or your parents are in a Registered Domestic Partnership at the time you file your 2007 FAFSA, you should notify the Commission to ensure compliance under this act. You will be mailed a G-37 Cal Grant Registered Domestic Partner Reporting Form to complete. You should also notify the school you plan to attend regarding your eligibility under this act for aid on their campus. You can also print out a copy of the form by going to [www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov) and clicking on the link for the Cal Grant Registered Domestic Partner Reporting Form (G-37).

## How to File an Appeal

If you wish to appeal your Cal Grant status, including the cancellation of your Cal Grant, you must submit a written request prior to any deadline indicated on the correspondence you received. The Commission will review your file and send you a written response.

Please send your written request, including the details of your reason for appeal, to the address on the back page of this manual. Due to privacy concerns, the Commission does not accept formal appeals via e-mail as supporting written documentation may be required.

## Personal Information Release Request

As noted in the Privacy and Protection section of this manual, Cal Grant participants over the age of 18 must submit a written request in order to allow the Commission to release Cal Grant information to a individual other than the participant, as required by California Civil Code 1798.24.

Participants who want to allow their Cal Grant information released to an individual (other than a school,) need to send the Commission a written release identifying the individual(s) to whom the information may released. The release of information will expire in 30 days unless a longer period of time is requested in the release request.

The Commission may be required to release your personal information without your prior consent as required by subpoenas, court orders, legal process or other legal obligations and to establish or exercise its legal rights or defend against legal claims. The Commission will share information in order to investigate, prevent or take action regarding illegal activities, suspected fraud or as otherwise required by law.

# How to Contact the Commission

When contacting the Commission, please include your name, Social Security number or CSAC ID, address, and phone number. When mailing to the Commission, obtain a \$0.95 United States Postal Service Certificate of Mailing to verify mailing by the appropriate deadline.

## General Correspondence and Appeals



California Student Aid Commission  
Student Support Services Branch  
P.O. Box 419027  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9027  
Form and Information Correction



California Student Aid Commission  
Cal Grant Operations Branch  
P.O. Box 419028  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9028  
Telephone and Fax  
(916) 526-7590 or Toll-free (888) 224-7268  
FAX (916) 526-8002



Office Hours  
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday,  
8:00 a.m.- 4:50 p.m.,  
Thursday,  
9:00 a.m. - 4:50 p.m.  
  
Internet Access  
[www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov)  
E-mail: [studentsupport@csac.ca.gov](mailto:studentsupport@csac.ca.gov)

WebGrants for Students  
[www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov)  
click on WebGrants for Students link